

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUSCAT 00959 091036Z

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO FAA WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

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FAA FOR MOORE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR MU

SUBJECT: DGCA REQUESTS REPLACEMENT OF CAAG MEMBER

REF: MUSCAT 704

1. ON AUGUST 9 OMAN DGCA SALIM BIN NASSIR TELEPHONED US TO REQUEST THE IMMEDIATE REPLACEMENT OF ARGYLE L. SMITH. SAID SMITH, UNHAPPY WITH HIS QUARTERS IN THE PAN AMERICAN COMPOUND AT SEEB AIRPORT, SENT A LETTER TO DGCA COMPLAINING ABOUT HIS HOUSING AND RECOMMENDING THAT FAA MEMBERS WITH FAMILIES NOT BE SENT TO OMAN. SMITH ALSO SAID IN LETTER THAT HE DOES NOT PLAN TO BRING HIS FAMILY HERE AND HAS SPOKEN TO FAA WASHDC ABOUT THIS PROBLEM. DGCA WAS DEEPLY OFFENDED BY THE LETTER AND INFORMED US THAT SMITH SHOULD LEAVE THE COUNTRY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. DGCA WISHES FAA TO REPLACE SMITH WITH AN AIRWORTHINESS SPECIALIST WITH ABOVE-AVERAGE ABILITY WHO IS QUALIFIED TO ISSUE LICENSES. RATHER THAN HAVE SMITH CONTINUE WORKING HERE UNTIL HIS SUCCESSOR ARRIVES, NASSIR WANTS SMITH TO LEAVE RIGHT AWAY EVEN IF THIS MEANS A GAP OF A FEW WEEKS. NASSIR EMPHASIZED THAT THE REPLACEMENT MUST BE A YOUNG MAN WHO CAN TOLERATE DIFFICULT LIVING CONDITIONS IN OMAN.

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PAGE 02 MUSCAT 00959 091036Z

3. AFTER RECEIVING CALL FROM DGCA, AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED EPISODE WITH SMITH. SMITH SAID HE HANDED LETTER IN QUESTION TO NASSIR'S SECRETARY AUGUST 8, ADDING THAT IT ALSO DISCUSSED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF HIS LICENSING DUTIES HERE AND THAT CAAG CHIEF CAKARNIS WAS AWARE OF ITS CONTENTS. SMITH FEELS THAT HIS PRESENT JOB OF LICENSING SPECIALIST HAS LITTLE SUBSTANCE NOW THAT INITIAL PERIOD OF ORGANIZING BULK OF GULF AIR CREW LICENSES IS ABOUT OVER AND THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN A LONG-TERM REPLACEMENT. HE RECOMMENDS THAT JOB BE REDESIGNATED TO AIRMAN CERTIFICATE SPECIALIST WITH POWERS TO INSPECT GULF'S AIR CHECK PILOTS AND OTHER SAFETY OFFICIALS. SMITH HAS SUGGESTED THESE CHANGES IN MEETINGS OF OMANGOV OFFICIALS, INCLUDING ONE AUGUST 8. HE BELIEVES AN EGYPTIAN ADVISER IN DGCA'S OFFICE, DISPLEASED BY SMITH'S ATTEMPTS TO EXPAND HIS ROLE, MADE REMARKS TO DGCA THAT WERE PREJUDICIAL TO SMITH. SMITH WISHES TO STAY IN OMAN FOR AT LEAST A WEEK UNTIL HIS WORK IS COMPLETED, BUT WE COUNSELED HIM THAT DGCA SEEMED IN NO MOOD TO AGREE TO SUCH A REQUEST.

4. WHILE DRAFTING THIS, HAVE LEARNED THAT CAAG MEMBER BEISIEGEL HAS BEEN HANDED LETTER FROM NASSIR FOR SMITH SUSPENDING HIM FROM DUTY AND DIRECTING HIM LEAVE ASAP. (CAKARNIS DEPARTED EARLY AUGUST 9 FOR MONTH'S VACATION IN U.S. HE PLANS TELEPHONE MOORE OF FAA AUGUST 11 FROM FLORIDA, AND MOORE SHOULD INFORM HIM OF SMITH'S SITUATION.) BEISIEGEL ATTEMPTING TELEPHONE MOORE LATER TODAY.

5. COMMENT: WE CONCLUDE THAT SMITH HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO LEAVE IN NEXT COUPLE DAYS, SINCE NASSIR FEELS THAT HE HAS BEEN PERSONALLY INSULTED BY SMITH'S REMARKS. DGCA BELIEVES THAT HOUSING FOR SMITH IS MORE THAN ADEQUATE AND FEELS THAT SMITH'S REMARKS WERE UNWARRANTED; WHILE THERE ARE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES WITH PAN AM COMPOUND LIVING, THIS WOULD NOT BE PROPER TIME FOR US TO APPROACH DGCA ON THAT SUBJECT. EXPEDITIOUS ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO FIND QUALIFIED PERMANENT REPLACEMENT. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT A TDY ADVISER NOT RPT NOT BE SENT TO FILL THE GAP, SINCE OMAN CAAG HAS HAD MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF LONG-TERM TDY PERSONNEL.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: FAA TRANSFER SMITH FROM OMAN IMMEDIATELY, TO REPLACE HIM WITH CAREFULLY-SCREENED YOUNGER MAN OF ABOVE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MUSCAT 00959 091036Z

AVERAGE STAMINA. FAA SHOULD SOUND OUT CAKARNIS ON QUESTION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED BY SMITH'S REPLACEMENT. REQUEST FAA REACTIONS TO THIS UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT BY MORNING AUGUST 10 OMANI TIME, INCLUDING FISCAL DATA FOR SMITH'S RETURN TRAVEL TO U.S.

7. ALSO REQUEST URGENTLY MOORE'S ASSESSMENT OF CAAG MISSION PERFORMANCE, PROBLEMS, TEAM LEADERSHIP, MORALE, ETC., BASED

ON HIS JUNE VISIT TO MUSCAT AND DISCUSSION WITH DGCA IN BAHRAIN.
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